

HA  
cont'd  
mg/l base. Preferably, iron is added to the base in an amount ranging from about 10 to about 200 mg/l and more preferably in an amount from about 50 to about 100 mg/l milk."

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claims 12-17 and amend the remaining claims as follows:

A2  
Subst  
B2  
2. (Amended) The medium according to claim 1, wherein the ribonucleotide precursors are ribonucleosides, each added in the range of from about 10 to about 500 milligrams per liter of the medium.

3. (Amended) The medium according to claim 1, wherein the ribonucleotide precursors are selected from the group consisting of adenosine, guanosine, cytidine, and uridine, and wherein the at least four amino acids added comprise cysteine.

B3  
4. (Amended) The medium according to claim 1, wherein the amount of iron added is in the range of about 10 to 200 milligrams of iron per liter of the medium.

C  
free  
5. (Amended) The medium according to claim 1, wherein the at least four amino acids added comprise cysteine, alanine, serine and isoleucine, each in an amount ranging from about 10 to about 200 milligrams per liter of the medium.

6. (Amended) The medium according to claim 7, wherein the compound that provides antioxidant or reducing activity is selected from the group consisting of cysteine, thioglycollic acid, ascorbic acid and mixtures thereof.

Subst  
B4  
7. (Amended) The medium according to claim 1, further comprising added magnesium and aspartic acid, and wherein the ribonucleotide precursors comprise free bases.

8. (Amended) The medium according to claim 9, wherein the at least four amino acids added comprise cysteine, alanine, serine and isoleucine, each in an amount ranging from about 10 to about 200 milligrams per liter of the medium; wherein the ribonucleotide precursors added are each in the range of from about 10 to about 500 milligrams per liter of the medium; and wherein the iron added is in the range of about 10 to about 200 milligrams per liter of the medium.

MF

A

C  
C  
C  
Cont'd

11. (Amended) The medium according to claim 1, wherein the milk-derived <sup>base</sup> ~~based~~ comprises whole milk, partially de-fatted milk, skim milk or ultra-high temperature pasteurized milk, <sup>wherein the milk-derived base</sup> ~~whether the milk-derived base~~ is prepared from <sup>a natural source</sup> ~~natural sources~~ or from dried milk powder by addition of water.

Please add the following new claims:

12 18. The medium according to claim 1, <sup>wherein</sup> ~~comprising the following:~~ <sup>for each nucleoside</sup> ~~adenosine, guanosine, and cytidine and uridine~~ in an amount of 0.1 g/l each; <sup>wherein said iron is</sup> ~~alanine, serine, isoleucine, cysteine~~ in an amount of 0.05 g/l each; and FeSO<sub>4</sub> in an amount of 0.1 g/l.

AB  
Subst.  
BS

19. A medium for growing *Lactobacilli* comprising:  
a milk-derived base; and an additive system that comprises at least four <sup>free</sup> ~~amino~~ acids, at least two ribonucleotide precursors selected from the group consisting of adenosine, guanosine, cytidine, and uridine, each added in the range of from about 10 to about 500 milligrams per liter of the medium, and iron in the range of about 10 to 200 milligrams of iron per liter of the medium to promote growth of *lactobacilli* in the medium.

C

14 20. The medium according to claim <sup>13</sup> ~~10~~, wherein the at least four <sup>free</sup> ~~amino~~ acids added comprise cysteine, alanine, serine and isoleucine, each in an amount ranging from about 10 to about 200 milligrams per liter of the medium.

15 21. The medium according to claim <sup>14</sup> ~~20~~, further comprising a compound that provides antioxidant or reducing activity selected from the group consisting of cysteine, thioglycollic acid, ascorbic acid and mixtures thereof.

16 22. The medium according to claim <sup>15</sup> ~~21~~, further comprising added magnesium and aspartic acid.

23. The medium according to claim 1, wherein the milk-derived based comprises whole milk, partially de-fatted milk, skim milk or ultra-high temperature pasteurized milk, whether the mild-derived base is prepared from natural sources or from dried milk powder by addition of water.